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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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R 240710Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0992
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 4082

FROM AMBASSADOR WOLLE MUSCAT

TEHRAN ALSO FOR DEPT ASST SEC SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PFOR, MOPS, MILI, MU
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SULTAN QABUS ON OMANI AND REGIONAL QUESTIONS

SUMMARY: HM SULTAN QABUS, WHO RETURNED CAPITAL AREA SEPT 10 AFTER FOUR-MONTH SOJOURN IN SALALAH, RECEIVED DEPT ASST SEC SOBER MORNING SEPT 18. SULTAN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OMAN'S INTERNAL PROGRESS EXCEPT FOR VITAL AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, AND DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES AS "GOOD OR VERY GOOD" EXCEPT FOR PDRY AND IRAQ (THOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT KUWAIT AS WELL). HE WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WINDING DOWN OF WAR IN DHOFAR AND CIVIL DEVELOPMENT THERE, AND GRATEFUL FOR IRAN'S MILITARY SUPPORT AND HER ABOVE-BOARD INTENTIONS TOWARD OMAN. SULTAN OPEN-MINDED ON CONCEPT OF PAN-ARAB FORCE
BUT DOUBTFUL IT WILL MATERIALIZE SOON. HE SHOWED REALISTIC, PRAGMATIC

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ATTITUDE TOWARD PDRY AND REGARDING RECENT EGYPTIAN-SAUDI APPROACHES

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TO ADEN, BUT DOUBTED ADEN GOVERNMENT WOULD IN FACT CHANGE ITS SPOTS. THROUGHOUT, QABUS DISPLAYED KEEN AND INFORMED INTEREST IN GULF AND PENINSULA DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. SULTAN QABUS WELCOMED MR. SOBER TO HIS PRIVATE OFFICE FOR 90-MINUTE DISCUSSION. MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ZAWAWI ATTENDED, WITH SOBER ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR. SOBER EXPRESSED GREAT PLEASURE AT RECEPTION AND SAID HE SAW VISIT, THOUGH BRIEF, AS OPPORTUNITY LEARN SOMETHING OF RAPID STRIDES OMAN MAKING UNDER HM'S GUIDANCE. SULTAN NOTED HIS PLEASURE AT LONGSTANDING RELATIONS WITH USG AND SAID HE CONSIDERED AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS IN ALL FIELDS A PRIMARY IMPETUS FOR ADVANCEMENT OF ENTIRE WORLD.

2. ASKED TO DESCRIBE OMAN'S INTERNAL SITUATION, SULTAN SAID DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS SO FAR HAVE FEATURED EDUCATION AND HEALTH, IN WHICH COUNTRY HAS DONE WELL, ALSO ROADS AND COMMUNICATIONS. HE TERMED PROGRESS LESS NOTABLE BUT SATISFACTORY IN LATTER TWO FIELDS. EMPHASIZED HE BELIEVES AGRICULTURE IS VITAL SINCE IT IS COUNTRY'S BEST PERMANENT MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD, PETROLEUM BEING A TRANSIENT FACTOR. PROGRESS LAGGING IN AGRICULTURE, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE MANY OF HIS PEOPLE IMPATIENT WITH SOMETHING IN WHICH PROFITS COME VERY SLOWLY. SPEAKING OF FINANCES, SULTAN SAID OMAN THOUGH LESS FORTUNATE THAN SOME IS FAR LUCKIER THAN MANY OTHER NATIONS DUE TO PAST YEARS'S OIL PRICE INCREASES. HE CONCLUDED THAT RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF OMAN'S HUMAN RESOURCES IS CENTRAL TO ALL INTERNAL PROGRESS.

3. SWITCHING TO FOREIGN RELATIONS, HM SAID OMAN HAS "GOOD OR VERY GOOD" RELATIONS WITH ALL BUT TWO ARAB STATES, THESE BEING PDRY AND IRAQ. RELATIONS ALSO VERY GOOD WITH IRAN. SULTAN PRAISED IRANIAN ASSISTANCE AND STATED HE HAS NO DOUBT THAT THEIR FORCES WILL DEPART WHEN DHOFAR WAR IS FINISHED. HE NOTED ESPECIALLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. SAID THAT WHILE SAUDI INTENTIONS EXCELLENT, IT OFTEN TAKES THEM SOME LENGTH OF TIME TO PROVIDE OR PERFORM WHAT THEY HAVE AGREED. REMARKED THAT SAUDIS, WHILE DOUBTLESS NERVOUS AT IRANIAN PRESENCE IN DHOFAR, HAVE NOT BEEN VOCAL ABOUT IT SINCE THEY REALIZE THEY SHOULD BE DOING MORE THEMSELVES TO AID OMAN'S CAUSE THERE. AS TO EGYPTIANS, THEY HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETIC, HELPFUL IN THEIR DIPLOMACY, AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT DHOFAR SITUATION AND IRANIAN AID. SULTAN STATED HE BELIEVES

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YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC DESERVES GREATER USG SUPPORT, DIRECTLY OR THROUGH OUR INFLUENCE WITH SAUDIS, TO REBUILD YAR ARMY. HE DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH UAE AS VERY GOOD NOTING HE APPRECIATED STATEMENT NOT LONG AGO BY SHAIKH ZAYID THAT IRAN IS EFFECTIVELY HELPING OMAN THAT HE WAS SURE IRANIAN MOTIVES ARE GOOD AND DO NOT INCLUDE INTENTION

TO KEEP FORCES PERMANENTLY IN DHOFAR.

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4. HM DWELT ON KUWAITI RELATIONSHIP WITH SPECIAL INTENSITY. THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES, HE SAID. KUWAITI PRESS, LIKE THE IRAQI, CONTAINS WILD, BASELESS COMMENTS ABOUT OMAN AND ITS POLICIES. KUWAIT SAYS IT ASSISTS PDRY ECONOMICALLY OUT OF SOME HOPE THAT THIS AID WILL BRING PDRY TO ITS SENSES AND CAUSE IT TO CEASE SUPPORT TO DHOFAR REVOLUTIONARIES. THIS, SAID HM, HAS NOT HAPPENED AND WILL NOT. THEY ACCEPT THE AID AND CONTINUE AS THEY PLEASE. ALSO, KUWAITIS CIRCULATE FALSE REPORTS TO EFFECT THAT OMAN HAS REJECTED OUTRIGHT THEIR OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE. SULTAN NOTED THAL WHILE HE HAS NOT SOUGHT AID FROM KUWAIT, HE WOULD BE WILLING ACCEPT IT BUT DEFINITELY NOT WHILE IT BEARS SUCH LABELS AS "SABAH SCHOOL, SABAH HOSPITAL, ETC."

5. SULTAN WENT ON THAT SOME TIME AGO HE DISCUSSED THESE PROBLEMS DIRECTLY WITH RKLER OF KUWAIT WHO DENIED HARMFUL INTENTIONS TOWARD OMAN AND EXCUSED KUWAITI PRESS AS BEING FREE AND NOT SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT CONTROL. SULTAN NOTED HE CONSIDERS THAT A POOR EXCUSE. RULER ALSO HAD DENIED TO HIM THAT KUWAIT'S FREQUENT AND FRIENDLY DISCUSSIONS WITH PDRY ARE AN ATTEMPT TO DIVERT PFLOAG FROM TROUBLEMAKING IN UPPER GULF. BUT QABUS RECEIVED THIS TOO WITH SOME SKEPTICISM. SULTAN DECLARED THAT KUWAITI FONMIN SABAH AL-AHMAD HIMSELF DURING PAST VISIT TO OMAN HAD EXHIBITED AN AMAZING FIXATION AGAINST IRANIANS AND THEIR INTENTIONS ON ARAB SIDE OF GULF, PARTICULARLY OMAN. SULTAN SAID HE CONSIDERS FONMIN AND OTHER KUWAITI LEADERS WAY OFF BASE IN THIS REGARD (AND SAID ARAB CRITICISM GENERALLY OF IRAN'S ROLE IN OMAN HAS BEEN EXTREMELY MODERATE).

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INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-14 DRC-01 /138 W
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R 240710Z SEP 74
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0993
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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6. THE DHOFAR WAR, SAID QABUS, IS GOING WELL. HE IS WINNING MORE PEO-

PLE TO HIS SIDE. CIVIL DEVELOPMENT IS EASTERN HALF DHOFAR BEING PUSH
ED
HARD. HM SAID HE HAD TRAVELED TO SEVERAL SITES IN EASTERN REGION
SHORTLY BEFORE RETURNING TO MUSCAT. HE EXPERIENCED NO TROUBLE AND
WAS PLEASED AT WHAT HE SAW: NEW SCHOOLS, EXTENSIVE WATER DRILLING,
ACTIVE RESETTLEMENT AND NEW BLOCKS OF SHOPS. SAID MIN SOCIAL AFFIARS
AND LABOR STARTING CONSTRUCTION OF 100 HOUSES ON THE JABAL. SULTAN
SAID NEXT STEP IS TO ATTEMPT REDUCE ENEMY'S ALREADY SLIPPING GRASP
ON WESTERN DHOFAR. AS OMAN PROCEEDS WITH THIS IN NEAR FUTURE, HE CAN
-
NOT BE SURE WHAT PDRY WITH THEIR RUSSIAN AND CUBAN ADVISERS WILL DECI
DE
TO DO, THEREFORE HE BELIEVES POSSESSION OF TOW ANTI-TANK WEAPON IS
IMPORTANT (SEE SEPTEL).

7. SOBER SPOKE OF CLOSE USG INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS IN DHOFAR.
SAID WE SUPPORTED FULLY SULTAN'S EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH PEACEFUL
CONDITIONS THERE AND PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS ELSEWHERE IN
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OMAN. HE ASKED ABOUT VARIOUS "NEW" CONCEPTS FOR ENDING DHOFAR WAR
SITUATION, SUCH AS ARAB LEAGUE MEDIATION EFFORT AND SO-CALLED
PAN-ARAB MILITARY FORCE. SULTAN REPLIED THAT FROM BEGINNING HE HAS
HELD LITTLE HOPE ALL MEDIATION WILL SUCCEED. YET HE HAS COOPERATED
FULLY, WHEREAS PDRY HAS NOT. EFFORT SEEMS INACTIVE AT PRESENT. AS
TO PAN-ARAB FORCE, SULTAN STATED HE DOES NOT OBJECT TO IT, BASED ON
WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO HIM OF CONCEPT. NOTHING WOULD PLEASE
HIM MORE THAN TO RECEIVE GREATER EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM WIDER GROUP
OF ARAB STATES. BUT MANY QUESTIONS MUST SURELY BE ANSWERED BEFORE
CARRYING IDEA INTO EFFECT. WHO WOULD COMMAND THIS FORCE AND WHAT
WOULD BE ITS MISSION? HOW WOULD IT BE SUPPLIED? HOW COORDINATED
WITH PRESENT SAF AND IRANIAN FORCES? HE NOTED THAT IRANIAN
PARTICIPATION ESPECIALLY IN AIR SUPPORT AND LOGISTICS IS DEFINITELY
PART OF PAN- ARAB CONCEPT AS PRESENTED TO HIM. (LISTENING TO HIM ON
THIS SUBJECT, ONE SENSED HE FELT IT WOULD NOT ACTUALLY MATERIALIZE
IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.)

8. SOBER EXPLAINED USG ATTITUDE TOWARD PDRY GOVERNMENT, NOTING WE
HAVE HAD NO CONTACTS WITH PDRY POLICYMAKERS BUT THAT IMMINENT
OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL AND OTHER FACTORS ARE CAUSING US TAKE CLOSE
LOOK AT HOW PDRY ATTITUDES AND POLICIES MIGHT BE MODERATED. WE
HAVE REACHED NO CONCLUSIONS BUT IT IS AN ACTIVE QUESTION. SULTAN'S

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COMMENTS ON PDRY WERE PRAGMATIC AND THOUGHTFUL. ASKED TO COMMENT ON PRESENT EGYPTIAN-SAUDI EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE PDRY TOWARD COOPERATION WITH OTHER ARAB STATES AND AWAY FROM SUPPORT FOR DHOFAR REBELS, QABUS SAID THIS IS FINE WITH HIM. HE BELIEVES EGYPT AND SAG ARE PROCEEDING SENSIBLY, KEEPING INTERESTED PARTIES INFORMED AND PROPERLY RETAINING THEIR REAL CARD (FINANCIAL AID) UNTIL PDRY ACTUALLY SHIFTS ITS POLICY. WHILE NOT OPTIMISTIC THIS WILL SUCCEED, HE FINDS NO FAULT WITH THE EFFORT. QABUS THOUGHT HE COULD CO-EXIST WITH PDRY IF LATTER WITHDREW SUPPORT FROM DHOFAR REBELS. SPEAKING VERY DELIBERATELY, HE TERMED SALIM RUBAYYI ALI A REASONABLE PERSON. IF ALI COULD SUCCEED IN CONTROLLING PDRY POLICY IT MIGHT TAKE PROPER DIRECTION. BUT SULTAN WONDERS IF ALI IS CLEVER AND STRONG ENOUGH TO HAVE HIS WAY. HE NOTED HE COULD APPRECIATE CONCERN OF PDRY LEADERSHIP AT FACT THAT SO MANY SOUTH YEMENI REFUGEES AND FORMER LEADERS RESIDE IN SAUDI TERRITORY AND ARE SUBJECT TO ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL USE AGAINST REGIME IN ADEN.

9. HM MENTIONED IN PASSING HIS PLANS TO ATTEND ARAB SUMMIT IN MOROCCO IN LATE OCTOBER. THERE WAS NO MENTION WHATEVER OF

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ARAB-ISRAEL QUESTION OR NEXT STEPS TOWARDS SOLVING IT. THE ALERTNESS, INTEREST AND FRANKNESS OF SULTAN QABUS THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE, AND HE SEEMED GENUINELY TO APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE.
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